

he was not a fan of Court packing during his campaign, but then he backtracked and said he was open to the idea.

Giving in to pressure from the far-left wing of his party, he created this Commission instead, leaving the problem of taking a position on this issue for another more politically convenient day.

As the Commission's report details, Court packing is often used as a political weapon in authoritarian regimes, not in the United States of America.

Take Venezuela, where Hugo Chavez cemented support for his socialist policies by expanding the country's Supreme Tribunal of Justice from 20 members to 32 members back in 2004. Look at all the good that did for what was once the wealthiest country in South America.

We need to leave this practice to dictatorships, where it belongs. Republics, like the United States, simply don't engage in this kind of behavior.

As the Commission's report says, stable democracies "have retained a strong commitment to judicial independence." Packing the Supreme Court would take an ax to that tradition of judicial independence.

The United States is the greatest country on Earth because of our respect for the rule of law, not in spite of it.

And in light of this report, a resolution I cosponsored earlier this year that would fix the number of Supreme Court Justices at nine is even more important, and I would like to thank Florida's senior Senator for leading the way on this.

In the American system of separation of powers and checks and balances, our role here in Congress is to make laws, not to interpret them. That is the job of our courts, and their independence in doing that job is absolutely vital.

As the Commissioners write in their report courts "cannot serve as effective checks on government officials if their personnel can be altered by those same government officials." That is a bipartisan group writing that—a bipartisan group where liberals outnumbered conservatives nearly 6 to 1.

We cannot pack the Supreme Court. President Biden needs to put an end to this dangerous idea once and for all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

CAMPUS FREE SPEECH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, many times my fellow Senators have heard me say that my definition of a university is a place where controversy ought to run rampant. The point of going to college is not for all students to come out thinking exactly the same way. College is for ideas to be challenged. To weed out ideas we disagree with, we need open debate, not to shut down the conversation. Students of all stripes should be able to say what is on their mind.

Institutional free speech should not be partisan. You can have partisan dis-

cussions, but the merely speaking of it, right or wrong, you agree or disagree, should not be a partisan issue or even be a controversial issue. Everyone is hurt if ideas are not frankly discussed by the next generation.

Thankfully, Iowa has recognized this reality. So this spring, Governor Reynolds signed a bill into law that helps codify free expression in Iowa's public colleges.

Now, it sometimes feels like Washington, DC, can forget common sense on this issue as well as a lot of other issues. But in Des Moines, the bill passed both chambers of the Iowa Legislature with just 1 single "no" vote out of 150 senators and representatives.

But here we are nationally. We seem to be heading in the wrong direction in regard to free speech on campus and discussion of some controversial issues. As recent as 2016, majorities of students were confident that the First Amendment was secure, but now it looks like there has been a chilling effect on too many campuses.

According to a more recent poll, 80 percent of the students now say that they self-censor. In other words, 80 percent of the students are afraid to voice and give their support or opposition on certain issues. Hostility to freedom of expression is being heard loud and clear by our students.

But somehow it doesn't seem like the donors seem to be listening to what is happening on these college campuses. I have tried to highlight this overlooked group of donors in the free speech debate. Students and faculty are limited by the threat of getting canceled on campus. But donors have much more sway if they want to take advantage of it.

Now, it seems, unfortunately, these alumnae don't seem to consider free speech when they make a decision to donate, because their donation would have some power behind it if they would take the time to say what they think about how universities ought to be an environment where controversy runs rampant.

We have a poll of donors to one college that found that the vast majority thought that freedom of expression should be a priority on campus, but only 20 percent said it was clear their alma mater protects speech in practice. Now, this is among donors, those who have already given despite their concerns. That is despite donations representing up to 19 percent of college budgets.

There are more examples than I can count of donors withholding contributions and making real concrete change. Donors have stopped speakers from being deplatformed and overrode the veto of the crowd.

It is time to stop pretending that alumni have no say. Earlier this year, I joined the Campus Free Speech Caucus here in the Congress. That caucus tries to preserve this trend. I am also a cosponsor of the Campus Free Speech Resolution, which urges greater First

Amendment protection in America's universities.

But this is not a problem that can be solved by any bill in the Senate. Thankfully, that tide is starting to turn. One of the first colleges to make a move was the University of Chicago. In 2015, the university president sent a statement on free expression to the incoming freshmen. He showed in that letter how both sides of the aisle are hurt when campuses clamp down on open debate. He called out what are considered "trigger warnings" and "safe spaces" while praising academic freedom.

Now other colleges in our country are slowly starting to follow suit. So far, 75 schools have released similar statements, but, of course, 75 schools is only a fraction of all the colleges in the United States.

To continue this progress we need individual Americans to make their voices heard. Ultimately, being a democracy means that we are able to listen to each other and do it civilly. We ought to be able to respectfully talk about where we agree and disagree, not sweep those disagreements under the rug and, in the process, silence those who do have the guts to speak out.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO FRANCIS S. COLLINS

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, Dr. Francis Collins, the Director of the National Institutes of Health, will retire this month after serving as the Director since 2009. That will be 12 years in one of the most challenging jobs in Washington, maybe even in the world.

Dr. Collins served under three Presidents in that job. No other person has served under more than one President. During that 12 years, certainly there had been amazing advances in healthcare.

As a Washington Post reporter put it, and this was a quote from his article, "News that Francis Collins is stepping down as Director of the National Institutes of Health is a bit like hearing that Santa Claus is handing off his reindeer reins." This is the time of year to think about that.

When he announced his retirement earlier this year, it was certainly followed by a flood of comments from the scientific community. They used words like "brilliant," "national treasure," "smartest man in any room," "beloved," and "gentleman." I would also echo those words. I think I would add, from the great opportunities I have had to work with him and spend time with him, "straightforward," "kind," "respected." By the way, he never seems

to need to act like the smartest person in any room even if and when he is.

You know, throughout the 12 years he has been Director, he has made countless contributions to biomedical research and public health. Under his leadership, the NIH started groundbreaking research programs like the BRAIN Initiative, which is aimed at revolutionizing our understanding of the human brain, and the All of Us Precision Medicine Initiative, which is a historic effort to try to tailor medical care to the individual, and we see that is where medical care is going.

As the Director of the NIH, Francis presided over the creation of the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, which translates basic science discoveries into cures. He started the Cancer Moonshot and the Accelerating Medicines Partnership and increased investment in Alzheimer's and opioid research. He also steered the U.S. Research Enterprise during a once-in-a-lifetime infectious disease pandemic. Without his vision and leadership, we may not have been able to develop and deliver several FDA-approved COVID vaccines, COVID therapies, and diagnostic tests in less than a year.

We wouldn't want to forget that this wasn't the first major health challenge that Dr. Collins navigated us through. He also led the responses to the H1N1 flu outbreak in 2009 and to the 2014 and 2015 Ebola outbreak. It does sort of make you wonder why he was still there when this pandemic came along, but, again, we are fortunate that he was.

His impact on health and healthcare really didn't start when he became the NIH Director. In fact, before becoming Director, he made significant contributions to the research field of genetics. He codiscovered the gene that causes cystic fibrosis, and he found genes for Huntington's disease and type 2 diabetes.

Maybe his most significant scientific contribution was to head the Human Genome Project, which mapped and sequenced the full human genome for the first time. That monumental effort has allowed scientists to unlock some of the great mysteries of human life. It has created the potential to develop treatments and cures for some of our most serious diseases. What it has really done is to have allowed us to begin to think about personalized medicine—realizing that every person is different than every other person and that everybody has the capacity to fight back against any disease that challenges them. Usually, the disease can quickly overwhelm that capacity, which is why the addition of immunotherapy and the addition of personalized medicine are such critical tools for today.

His work had a tremendous impact at the time, and it will have an even greater impact. We can see that impact as we move forward and look at how we need to look at personalized medicine. All of this has been accomplished in a

way wherein very few scientists, I think, could have had the articulation of vision that Francis has to share it in a way that people can not only begin to understand these concepts but buy into the concepts.

Certainly, one of the proudest accomplishments I had in the Senate with him was in working to increase NIH funding. When I became chairman of that committee 7 years ago, we had a 10-year stagnation, really, in funding. In working with Senator DURBIN, who was here earlier this morning and talked about Dr. Collins—I tried to grab, to join, that moment but couldn't—and with Senator Alexander and Senator MURRAY on our side of the building and many others and in working with Congressman COLE and now-Chairwoman DELAURO of the Committee on Appropriations on the other side, we just decided we were going to make NIH research a priority and, over the next 7 years, increase funding by 43 percent at a time when so many things were happening so quickly.

Francis Collins, of course, not only was part of sharing that goal but, frankly, was also part of saying: Don't come up with a goal where, when you get there, you are going to stop. Let's keep moving forward as long as we are making the kinds of scientific advances that we know the country needs to make and the world needs to make. And we are doing that.

Finally, he may be remembered the most in many cases for the hope he just has been able to bring to patients and communities. He is a physician. He is a scientist. He has been the Director of NIH, as I said, for 12 years. But part of his real ability is the ability to share who he is and to share the potential of science.

During the time of COVID, we saw Francis coming up with songs and other ways to really focus on the pandemic and the way we need to respond to that pandemic. He is an incredibly skillful person. His legacy, I think, will live through generations of researchers. He has inspired the countless lives he has touched. His impact will be felt for a long time.

I just want to say, on behalf of all of my colleagues—all of whom have been part of that progress of making NIH and health research a priority—thank you, Francis, for your leadership, for your friendship, and for your public service.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Madam President, before I start my remarks, I would like to thank the Senator from Missouri and add my thanks to Dr. Francis Collins for his leadership and for his contributions to our country, to our country's future, and for his reassurance during very difficult times.

I thank Senator BLUNT for so eloquently recognizing Dr. Collins.

NOMINATION OF SAMANTHA D. ELLIOTT

Madam President, I also rise today to support Samantha Elliott's nomination

to serve on the U.S. District Court for the District of New Hampshire.

Our court system was established to serve as an independent arbiter that would deliver equal justice under the law, and our democracy requires an independent and impartial judiciary for us to continue moving forward as a nation. I am confident that, if confirmed, Samantha Elliott will bring the necessary impartiality, experience, and commitment to justice to the Federal bench.

A resident of Concord, NH, Ms. Elliott has spent years representing Granite Staters and has been a leader within the New Hampshire legal community. In her legal practice, she has represented clients at every level of New Hampshire's State court, the U.S. District Court for the District of New Hampshire, and the First Circuit Court of Appeals.

Throughout her career, Ms. Elliott has earned the respect and admiration of those within the legal community. With the support of her peers, she has been selected for inclusion in the "Best Lawyers in America" as well as in the "New England Super Lawyers." These awards are a testament to the reputation that she has built in and outside the courtroom.

For this role on the U.S. District Court for the District of New Hampshire in particular, members of the American Bar Association's Standing Committee unanimously found Ms. Elliott to be "well qualified"—a distinction that reflects Ms. Elliott's integrity, professional competence, and temperament.

I also want to note Ms. Elliott's impressive record of using her professional expertise to give back to her community and to our State. She has served on the board of New Hampshire Legal Assistance and with the Legal Advice and Referral Center, which is dedicated to providing legal services to low-income Granite Staters. This year, she became cochair of the founding board of directors for 603 Legal Aid—another critical resource and legal support system for those in need. She has taken on all of these roles while also fulfilling leadership roles within her own firm and tending to a robust legal practice of her own.

Members of New Hampshire's small and tight-knit legal community marvel at Ms. Elliott's time management skills as well as her wide-ranging practice and capacity as an attorney. But what drives her colleagues' respect and admiration is her clear-eyed and passionate commitment to ensuring that everyone in our democracy has access to justice and her understanding that lawyers are privileged to be able to provide it.

Samantha Elliott will be a fair-minded, balanced, and intellectually curious judge who will serve Granite Staters with distinction on the U.S. District Court for the District of New Hampshire. I look forward to voting in favor of her nomination, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.